

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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I KILLED LINCOLN

by Joe Gantner

The Spanish-American War was over, and I was returning home on the train with an honorable discharge in my pocket from the army. I felt intensely happy to feel that I was again a free man, and that I no more would have to go through the excessive training and dangers of an army life.

Somewhere in Texas my train was speeding me home to mother and freedom. Soon I would again blend into a quiet and peaceful life of reconstruction after a war. It was night time and I was sitting alone in the coach of the train, reading a magazine, I had just bought. It was raining hard, and the water poured in sheets against the window panes as the train sped through the night. For some unaccountable reason I was the only one in this coach. I could hear the noise of many men talking in the smoking apartment ahead.

The rear door of the coach opened, and I noticed a man well advanced in years approaching me, and coming along the aisle, holding on to the seats as though it was difficult for him to stand up. With all of the vacant seats in the coach, he would have to pick the one opposite to me! I could smell that he had been drinking. I felt rather irritated, as I was reading a special story about Lincoln and I wanted to be alone, and not to be bothered by the idle chatter of a possible drunk man.

There was still a distinctive appearance about this man. Although his clothes were well worn, and in some places almost threadbare, he had kept

them neat and clean looking, as though he wanted the world to know that he was once the member of aristocratic and fashionable society. He was of medium height, dark eyes, and hair almost white, and his face was covered by a beard. Those eyes! I had to give a second look at them. They were the most magnetic and compelling eyes I had ever seen.

Having seated himself against the window of the train and placing his cane against his side, he for the first time seemed to become cognizant of me, and he said:

"Young man! I see by your uniform you are just returning from the war."

"Yes! and believe me I am sure glad to get home again."

"War is a terrible thing, and it makes brutes out of the most refined and gentlest of men." He replied.

"I was just reading here about Lincoln's Death" I answered seeing that he was very interested, "I can't for the life of me see why anyone, unless he was insane, or a dope fiend, would want to cut a man's life short like Lincoln's, when his work was only half completed. Having the burdens and responsibilities of a big major war, and his only reward was death. It doesn't seem just somehow. I hope some 'nut' doesn't take it into his head to kill President McKinley. It looks to me that after every war some tragedy like that has to happen."

I noticed the stranger's face turn pale, and an expression of deep sorrow came into his eyes, after these rather heated remarks of mine. Looking surprisingly at me he said:

"Young Man! It is hard to under-

stand the motives and interests of other people, and for your own good I hope you will never be connected with a major tragedy."

With these remarks he turned his head towards the window, and relaxed into silence. I noticed his face twitched and he seemed to have the greatest difficulty to keep his expression calm. I returned to reading my book, as he did not seem to want to converse any more. I was very glad of this, as the Lincoln Story I was reading was very interesting, and I was sorry I had been interrupted.

I continued to read. I happened to glance at the stranger and he was wiping his eyes as if he had been crying and was ashamed that I would notice it. I felt uneasy, what could I have said to have bothered this stranger so? I could not at the time think up any consoling thought, so I went back to my reading.

Suddenly I instinctively became aware that the stranger's eyes were upon me, and that he was staring at me with the greatest intensity. I paid no attention to him as I was in a very interesting part of the story. He must have been gazing steadily at me for over a couple of minutes, and I was barely aware of his presence. When suddenly his voice broke out in the silence of the coach, sharp and clear like the crack of a whip.

"I killed Lincoln!"

I looked up with the greatest of surprise, I would not have felt any more shocked if a case of dynamite had exploded near me. His face was deathly pale as if he were trying to hold back some deep emotion. I wondered was this man insane, or was the alcohol starting to work on him.

"You killed Lincoln?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Pride mainly! I thought I would be the greatest hero in this Country."

"It says in this very article that I am reading, that Lincoln was killed by John Wilkes Booth, and that the soldiers killed Booth in a barn. How could you be the murderer of Abe Lincoln? What is your name stranger?" I asked.

"John Wilkes Booth."

"John Wilkes Booth" I said with great surprise, "Now I know you are either crazy or drunk. How could he

have lived all these years without being found out?"

"Actors know many ways to disguise themselves, that most people know nothing about."

"Who was the man killed in the barn?"

"That was William O'Mell my double, and understudy."

"Your double, and understudy, what do you mean?"

"Famous Actors always have doubles or understudies so that in case the star is sick or drunk, he takes the place of the star actor, and the public is never any the wiser. This O'Mell had to take my place many a time, as I was at that time a habitual drunkard, and of which habit was the cause of my downfall and disgrace. O'Mell was a very talented man, and it was his greatest delight to take the place of a great Booth. I encouraged him in every way, as it was a relief to me to take off whenever I felt like it. Even the life of a famous actor gets monotonous at times. I remember the delight that would come in his eyes, as I said:

"O'Mell take my place tonight, I am not feeling well."

"If this O'Mell was an innocent man why did he flee on that horse?" I asked.

"He had been playing my part on the stage that night, and when he heard the terrible clamor, and the people rushing up to the stage shouting, 'Kill Booth! He shot the President!' He must have been afraid the people did not know the real Booth, so jumping on a horse he quickly rode out of town to his death ten days later."

"How did you escape?" I asked.

"After shooting Lincoln, I jumped from the box to the stage, and I sprained or broke my leg. I hobbled as fast as I could to my dressing room and hid there. I expected any moment to be taken out and lynched. Seeing my make-up box near, I started to disguise myself as a very old and feeble negro. I am a master of disguise, learning many secrets from my famous father. I heard the people shouting in the street that Booth had escaped on a horse. Being sure my disguise was perfect I slipped out of the back door, and hobbled painfully down the alley."

"Around the theatre were little groups of the morbid curious mobs talking over the tragedy." The stranger continued, "I painfully walked from one colored group to another, and kept moaning 'Too bad that dear Marse Lincoln should get killed now just when he intended to do so much for us poor negros.' My leg was very painful. The negros probably thought I had rheumatism bad. I wandered down the street, and seeing a farmer going out of town, I asked him for a ride, and after riding quite a way from town, I got out and hid in the woods, curing my leg the best I could with mud treatments. You know mud will take the pain out of any sprain. I was glad I had sense enough to take my make-up box with me, as under many different disguises I was enabled to reach Texas."

Just then the train began to slow down, and the colored porter stuck his head in the door, and I believe he yelled "Bonzil." I have never been certain of the town he yelled that night. I believe it is somewhere between Waco and Dallas, but I am not sure.

"Why should you tell me all this, don't you know I will have to report you to the law?" I questioned the stranger.

"Don't worry young man!" he answered, "no one would believe you."

Just then the conductor came thru the train, and said,

"Here's where you get off, John Wilkes Booth. You will soon be in your shack over there on that hill, and you will soon be sleeping off that 'jag' you now have on."

"It is men like you, that keep the world from growing wiser," said the stranger haughtily.

As the stranger passed by me, he had a sneering look upon his face, as if he was saying, "I told you so." As he walked up the aisle I noticed he was very crippled. One leg was much shorter than the other. Being a voice student I noticed his voice was very clear and resonant, and had great carrying power, every vowel being distinctly enunciated.

The train had stopped, and I could see a light here and there of a very small village. Soon the train was moving again, and the conductor came back through the car swinging his

lantern. I asked him;

"How do you know that fellow is not John Wilkes Booth?"

"Listen partner! Has that fellow been feeding you that stuff again. Everyone around here knows him as the biggest liar in these parts. Most people around here thinks he is crazy, and don't believe a word he says. If I were you I would forget everything he has told you, and just count it as the ravings of an insane man. You know that most insane people believe they are either Napoleon or Julius Caesar. This one happens to believe he is John Wilkes Booth." The Conductor replied.

"All the same if I were you people I would investigate this man better. He certainly put forth some mighty good evidence that he is John Wilkes Booth." I answered.

"I still bet he is a nut" said the conductor as he moved on. "He is known around these parts by the name of John Angelo."

I sat there wondering about the stranger, and soon I fell asleep, and when I woke up I was well into Oklahoma, and nearing my home state, good "Old Missouri."

What a joy it is to again be home and eating with your feet under the family table. I believe if we look back on the most joyous days of our life there is none happier than the honorably discharged soldiers return home. Soon I was again blending into the life of a civilian. I have often wondered, if that night on the train, if I were really talking to the murderer of Lincoln.

Recently I picked up an old photograph magazine, called LIFE, and for several pages there was a mummified body that has been shown for years at Carnivals, as the body of John Wilkes Booth. I can't say that the mummy looks like the stranger I met on the train that night, as my Booth had a beard on, but I will say there is a very strong resemblance in those very magnetic eyes.

It would not surprise me, after this episode, to hear that the Twelve Apostles were still living. You know Christ said "He that eatest of my body, and drinketh of my blood shall have life everlasting." He may have been talking about living forever on this earth, instead of in heaven. Who

can tell? I can't.

(Note. This story is purely fictional, as told by the biggest liar in 17 states.)

JAMES BRIDGER — NO. 2

by Clyde Wakefield

James Bridger was born in 1804 and died upon his farm south of Kansas City, in 1881. He was considered the most skillful, the most famous trailfinder and scout in the history of the West.

At the age of nineteen he enlisted in St. Louis under General William Ashley of the new Rocky Mountain Fur Company. General Ashley had advertised in a newspaper for "one hundred young men to ascend the Missouri River to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years."

Jim Bridger at nineteen was the youngest of all these famous men, the camp numbered both veterans and greenhorns, "Old" Hugh Glass, burly Moses or "Black" Harris, Nat Fitzgerald, Tony Lajeunesse the French trapper, they and others had been in the beaver country before; Jed Smith the quiet blue-eyed youngster from Ohio, Billy Sublette from Kentucky, Tom Fitzpatrick, and Jim Bridger, were among the greenhorns.

As a green trapper he started, soon rose to be leader of trappers, discovered the Great Salt Lake, was first to explore the Yellowstone Park, hunting, trapping and scouting took him through the countries of the Blackfeet, the Crows, the Snakes and the Nez Percés or Pierced Noses of the Northwest, through the mid-regions of the Diggers, the Mountain Utes, the plains Arapahoes, Cheyennes and Sioux to the Navajos, the Apaches and Comanches of the Southwest desert.

He founded a trading post, Fort Bridger, in southwestern Wyoming; there the Indians brought there furs, there emigrants overland for Oregon and California stopped for rest and supplies.

He was a favorite guide for Government expeditions exploring the Far West. Whenever a troublesome country was to be crossed or an Indian campaign was due the Army summoned Jim Bridger to be Chief of Scouts.

Jim Bridger lived to a ripe old age in spite of his hard service on the trail. He outlived most of the early beaver trappers and those Indian chiefs with whom he had lodged or fought.

His name is kept upon the maps by the numerous places named after him. Bridger's Pass that he had found over the Rocky Mountains in southern Wyoming, was used as a short cut by the Overland Stage to and from Salt Lake and by other overland travel. Bridger station and old Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming, Bridger Lake just outside the southeast corner of the Yellowstone Park, Bridger Mountains and Bridger Peak in Montana, and in Mount Washington Cemetery of Kansas City a large monument over his grave is inscribed with his name and his career: but his most enduring monument is his reputation as a genuine mountainman and plainsman, a pathfinder without a peer.

FACTS ABOUT THE "TWO BILLS" AND BUNTLINE

by Rev. Roland D. Sawyer

In the December number of "The Round-Up" there appeared two items which would throw great discredit on Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill, and Ned Buntline.

I wish to state a few facts about the three, which to my mind show the writer in CORONET, who sought to discredit Buffalo Bill and Buntline, is one of those scum of the earth to feast on scandal mongering.

In 1882 a man named Fulton headed a colony that settled in Nebraska, and his daughter Frances, a very intelligent and fine girl, married one of our young ministers, Rev. Joseph Herbert, and became a fine woman and minister's wife.

She was acquainted with a family in one of my parishes, visited there one summer, and told us of the Cody family, she being a great friend of Miss Arta Cody.

She said the family was most highly respected there, that they had a beautiful home near North Platte. She was a frequent guest there with her friend Arta Cody. She spoke in highest terms of Mrs. Cody, and Buffalo Bill her

husband; their three living children were girls, Arta, Orro and Irma; the one son Kit Carson died young.

Bill's father, Isaac, moved to Kansas in 1852, was stabbed by a pro-slavery man in 1854, lived three years an invalid and died.

Bill supported the family by working as a herder of beef cattle, then going to Gen. A. S. Johnson's army, who was operating against the Mormons. He killed his first Indian in a night fight, when Indians attacked the herders and killed three of them. He later was pony express rider, stage driver, hunter, trapper and Indian scout for the government.

He married in 1865, was elected to the legislature in 1871. He told Mrs. Herbert the origin of his name, given him because he furnished Buffalo meat to the builders of the Union Pacific RR, and that he had killed on one day, 69 Buffaloes, and had always regretted he could not make it an even 70. Mrs. Herbert said he was a thoro gentleman, and had a room full of trophies gathered from the hunt and chase.

Bill was a great lover of his family, and he and Mrs. Cody were heart-broken the same year, when little Or-ra died.

Now as for Buntline. Years ago I knew Manning, who wrote novels for Beadle, he then lived in Malden, Mass. I also carried on correspondence with Oll Coomes and T. C. Harbaugh.

All three men agreed as to Buntline, they said of him, that he was a showman, loved the dramatic and to put on the dog, but was a very able man and writer, and all three said that he and Prentiss Ingraham were the best of the Beadle writers. Manning, Harbaugh and Oll Coomes said they received \$50 each for a dime size story, and \$30 for a Half-Dime; but Buntline and Ingraham received \$75 and \$40 for the same size stories.

Now for Wild Bill, Mrs. Herbert said a cabin, called "Wild Bill Cabin" stood near a creek leading from Indian River, and was a government constructed and owned station for changing horses, etc., and that road near by was called Golden Trail.

The cabin was a long and low building. Wild Bill was in charge of it, when six men rode up and demanded the property. Bill refused their de-

mand and in the fight that followed Bill killed four and the other two fled.

She said the decent people were great in their praise for Bill's courage and fight, for he ridded the territory of worse than useless men and nobly defended government property.

Mrs. Herbert and her husband were pastor and wife there many years, knew the country and its people, were intelligent and sincere, and there is not the slightest doubt but she was telling the truth in every particular.

About 40 years ago William E. Connelley was secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, and he searched carefully for all particulars of western history, in the days from the Civil War on.

He published three books, DONIPHAN'S EXPEDITION TO NEW MEXICO AND CALIF.; QUANTRILL AND THE BORDER WARS; WILD BILL AND HIS ERA.

In that last named book he pays tribute to Wild Bill, whom he personally knew. "As easily the most redoubtable of all the gun fighters, who as peace officers in the decade 1870-1880, enforced order in the cattle towns of Kansas.

Connelley was 40 years collecting his material for his story of WILD BILL.

Fred Sutton, Walter Noble Burns, William MacLeod Raine, also wrote interesting historic books about the gun-fighters of those days, including Wild Bill.

And while I am writing, I have first hand information on the killing of Billy the Kid. I secured it from a man who was working in the community when Billy was killed.

Billy was spending a night with a friendly Mexican family, and in bed with a Mexican girl, when he heard a noise. Reaching for his gun, not wishing to kid a friend, he called out in Spanish, "Who is it? Who is it?" The door was open, the night dark, and Pat Garrett, taking aim as near as he could at the voice, fired, fortunately for him, he hit the mark.

But there was little that was heroic in the shooting, for Pat knew Billy was in there with the girl, and the danger of shooting her instead of the Kid was great. But I guess a Mexican girl did not count for much.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Albert Pohlman says he was tickled very much to get a lot of his wants in the Chicago Ledger. He still needs a lot, so fellows, send him a list of what you have for sale.

Frank Jack of Kezar Falls, Maine, says that Gilbert Patten was born 7 miles from his home. Gil was born in Corinna, Maine. Gil's son used to go to school with the assistant superintendent of a certain mill in Kezar Falls.

Irven N. Arnold and Benjamin F. Gravely are after books and novels written by F. Duboscobey, although Bro. Gravely would rather have them in New Magnet or Magnet Lib.

George Sahr writes Geo. Flaum that he saw more novels at Caldwell's and Cummings places than he ever saw in his life. This'll be something to remember!

Ray Caldwell and wife have been in bed two weeks with the flu, but are feeling pretty good once more.

A number of fellows have written in saying I should charge \$1.00 per copy. Maybe I should, but it depends how easy my printer lets me off. If he gives me a break then I can give you the same, and charge a quarter per copy.

1945 seems to be a year of the past, and let's hope 1946 gives us all a better year in every way.

Ray Caldwell says that it's hard to get a collection of novels, because so many stories were first published in serial story papers and worthwhile work would have to follow them thru the different formats. Comfort, Sunshine, Good Stories and numerous other mail order magazines carried serials of Ellis, Col. Prentiss Ingraham and others, even some of the old farm papers and mags, had serials, so Ray has a general collection, and thinks of them as "Popular Periodicals published for the Pleasure of the People in the Past."

Ralph Smith says the Jack Wrights originally appeared in the Boys Star Library, and some of them in serials in the Boys of New York.

You can find Jack Wright stories in various other Weeklies and Story Papers, such as Golden Weekly, Happy Days, Pluck & Luck, Young Men

of America as well as many publications over in England. They appeared in Pluck & Luck in colors. N. Y. Detective Library has one or two issues of them too. Very popular, next to Frank Reade. No. 139 was the first one in Pluck & Luck.

Valuable magazines to be on the lookout for: St. Nicholas Mag., containing stories of Edna St. Vincent Millays juvenile in May 1910, March 1914 and Aug. 1916. Worth about \$6.00 each.

Lippincotts Mag. for Feb. 1890 and Jan 1891. Worth about \$15.00 each. Arthur Conan Doyle's "Study in Scarlet" is in the Feb. issue, and Kipling's "Light that Failed," is in the January issue. Harpers Mag., Jan. to Aug. 1894 worth \$12.00 to \$36.00. The Pocket Mag., for April 1896 and July 1897 worth \$3.00 to \$60.00. Coronet Mag., the older issues will be valuable in years to come.

Wm. B. McCafferty wants Robin Hood Libraries or tales.

Frank Leslie's Boys and Girls Weekly ran to 905 numbers. Last of the small size was 538. Large size started No. 539. Heading changed with No. 369. Larger heading started No. 370. Again heading changed at No. 870. New heading No. 871. Not much change though.

H. O. Jacobsen wants Young Klondike #6-11-18-34-37-38 and Diamond Dick Jr. Weekly #104-109-113.

George Sahr and Ray Caldwell discovered 4 or 5 James Boys Stories in the American Indian Weekly.

T. Kenneth Meadway lost his mother Aug. 31st and J. C. Dykes mother on Dec. 3rd, she was a real character, went to Texas in a covered wagon just about the time the last Indian troubles were over. She was 82 when she died.

Brothers John S. Raulett, novel hero of other days, died Nov. 27th. He died after an operation in Camden, Maine.

Charles Jonas, known to many as Chut, Seajay, C. J., and A Friend, died Dec. 5th. He was a real guy and will be missed by many a friend. We will all miss him. God bless him, and all the others.

Here is a suggestion for the Brotherhood. I don't know about the rest of you, but I feel we members do not mix enough. A very few know a very few, and the rest are just names and

addresses in the Roundup. I think it would be a good idea if each member would write a short biography of himself, say about 200 to 300 words, and have it printed in the Roundup. No charge, of course, and no advertising. One could give his age, business connection or form of employment, what series or library he collects, and why, his other hobbies if any, his family, his likes and dislikes, in fact, a word picture of each member. It would help a lot to keep up interest in collecting novels. For instance, take Joe Blimp, member #1277. He collects Liberty Boys of 76 and has a side line of collecting left-handed buttonhooks. Wouldn't it be nice if, thru the Round Up, he found some others interested in the same things. Or maybe right-handed buttonhooks. Then they could, thru their own correspondence, argue the merits of each. Many interesting things could develop. For instance, I have often wondered what Brothers Cummings, Guinon, Smeltzer, Brewer, etc., do for a living, besides deal in novels. Is member No. 18 any relation to Arthur Westbrook? Does Delbert Love live anywhere near my wife's folks in West Virginia? How many members read the novels? How many just collect? How many accumulate them? How many read the short stories and items in the back of them?

I could ask a lot of questions, and would like to have them answered. Being a newspaper man I would be

glad to write these articles, if the brothers will send me the facts. If interested, write to T. Kenneth Meadway, 206 W. Sixth St., Boyertown, Pa. I will make no charge of any kind, I just want to make the hobby more interesting.

Notice has been received of the death of Charles Jonas, of Chicago. He was the eldest and only remaining son of the late Carl Jonas, former Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin. He was born August 20, 1874 in Racine, Wis. and served as United States Vice Deputy Consul at Crefeld, Germany, the large textile manufacturing district and center of technical studies during President Cleveland's second administration. In later years he was President and Manager of a Steel Furniture Corporation in Chicago but due to ill health has been retired for many years. He is survived by his widow Hattie. Interment was at Manitowoc, Wis., Dec. 6, 1945.

Photos of old Novels can be had at 10c each, such as Handsome Harry Nos. 1 to 16, also Pluck & Luck Nos. 1 to 100 so far. Send in your order now, don't wait.

RALPH F. CUMMINGS
Fisherville, Mass.

FOR SALE

Rare old time American Libraries that have been reproduced, and look just like the originals in every way. As a fellow says, if you can't get the original, get next door to it. They are:

- #1. Beadle's Half Dime Library #1. Deadwood Dick, Prince of the Road, by Edward L. Wheeler.
- #2. Morrisons Sensational Series #46. Frank James on the Trail. No authors name listed.
- #3. Boys Star Library #344. Jack Wright and His Electric Stage; or, Leagued Against the James Boys. By Nona.
- #4. Wide Awake Library #553. Frank Reade and His Steam Horse. By Nona.
- #5. Wide Awake Library #451. The True Life of Billy the Kid.
- #6. Nugget Library #134. Tom Edison Jr.'s Electric Sea Spider (A close second to the Frank Reade and Jack Wright stories of inventions.)

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Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

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